

# *Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary*

## *Management Plan Review*

The Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary (sanctuary) protects humpback whales and their habitat in the main Hawaiian Islands. The sanctuary works to achieve this goal through scientific research, education, public outreach, and by facilitating observance of federal and state laws that prohibit disturbing these endangered marine mammals.

Congress established the sanctuary in 1992 via the Hawaiian Islands National Marine Sanctuary Act (HINMSA). Full designation of the sanctuary was completed when the sanctuary's completed its first management plan in June of 1997. The plan was later reviewed in 2002 through a process required by law that included public review and comment. The sanctuary has undertaken another management plan review (MPR) process to address current and emerging issues and to increase management effectiveness.

### What is a Management Plan and why is it being reviewed?

A sanctuary management plan is a site-specific planning and management document that describes the goals, objectives, and management activities for a sanctuary. Management plans generally outline regulations, describe boundaries, identify staffing and budget needs, and set priorities and performance measures for resource protection, research, and outreach and education programs.

The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) is required by law to periodically review sanctuary management plans to ensure that sanctuary sites continue to conserve, protect, and enhance their nationally significant living and cultural resources. This allows the site to include new and relevant scientific information and advances in marine resource management to ensure current issues are being addressed.

### How did the process begin?

This process began with an assessment of the existing sanctuary management plan, regulations, and threats to sanctuary resources; in this case the humpback whale and its habitat. As stated in the HINMSA, the sanctuary and the state of Hawai'i will consider other marine resources for possible inclusion in the sanctuary, an effort supported by the Governor. The public is encouraged to participate and comment during the MPR process.

### Why is the sanctuary considering adding new marine resources?

The identification of marine resources in addition to humpback whales and their habitat was stipulated by Congress in the 1992 HINMSA. During the 2002 management plan review and revision process, numerous public comments were received requesting the sanctuary to increase its scope to include the conservation and management of additional resources. In 2007, the HIHWNMS and State of Hawai'i produced a report entitled "Assessment of Additional Resources for Possible Inclusion in the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary". Governor Linda Lingle has since expressed her support for considering other marine mammals and sea turtles for possible inclusion to the sanctuary. In response to the Congressional mandate, the Governor's support, and public opinion, the sanctuary is implementing a process to engage communities and explore, among other issues, the possibility of increasing the scope of the sanctuary to include other marine resources in addition to humpback whales.

### How will the public be involved?

All interested parties are welcome to participate and provide comment during the public scoping process. This process will include scoping meetings on Kaua'i, O'ahu, Moloka'i, Lana'i, Maui, and the Island of Hawai'i. The meetings are not decision-making meetings, however, all comments received will help to identify programmatic needs and issues to address as the sanctuary, advisory council, and constituents proceed to work together for the duration of the MPR process.

- Over, please. -



### What are scoping meetings?

Scoping meetings provide a forum for resource users, interest groups, government agencies, and other members of the public to provide comments on what they believe should be addressed in an updated management plan. They are not decision making meetings. The comments received will help define program needs to address during the sanctuary management plan review process.

### Where and when will the meetings be held?

Scoping meetings will be held on O'ahu, Maui, Hawai'i, Kaua'i, Lana'i, and Moloka'i. The schedule will be announced online at [hawaiiumpbackwhale.noaa.gov](http://hawaiiumpbackwhale.noaa.gov).

### What can I expect at the scoping meetings?

At the beginning of each meeting, sanctuary staff will provide information on the background and programs of the sanctuary. Following a brief introduction, the group will break up into roundtable discussion groups. A group leader at each table will help facilitate the discussion and ensure everyone has the opportunity to comment. All comments will be recorded.

### What happens following the scoping meetings?

**Action Plans:** After the public scoping period, sanctuary staff will review all comments and work with the Sanctuary Advisory Council and the public to prioritize issues for the management plan review. Additional workshops may be conducted to develop action plans that address priority issues. These action plans will form the foundation of the draft management plan.

**Draft Management Plan:** The draft management plan will contain action plans that address resource protection issues and will outline management of the sanctuary. Additionally, it may also propose regulatory changes. The sanctuary will provide additional opportunities for the public to comment on the draft management plan.

**Environmental Assessment:** Federal and state agencies will conduct a full environmental assessment, as required by law, to address any potential environmental impacts resulting from the proposed actions in the draft management plan.

**Final Management Plan:** Following a second public comment period, the ONMS will make any necessary changes prior to issuing the final management plan. The proposed management plan, regulations, and any recommendations concerning the addition of other marine resources in the sanctuary must receive final approval from the Governor of Hawai'i.

### How can you provide input?

The sanctuary encourages the public to participate and provide comments throughout the management plan review process. Those interested in providing comments to the sanctuary can mail, e-mail, or fax written comments directly to the Management Plan Review Coordinator at:

Management Plan Review Coordinator  
Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary  
6600 Kalaniana'ole Hwy. Suite 301  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96825  
E-mail: [hihwmanagementplan@noaa.gov](mailto:hihwmanagementplan@noaa.gov)  
Fax: 808-397-2650

### Where can I get more information?

Find out more online at [hawaiiumpbackwhale.noaa.gov](http://hawaiiumpbackwhale.noaa.gov) or contact the sanctuary office at 1.888.55.WHALE. Also, visit us online to subscribe to the management plan review listserve to receive e-updates about the process.